

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

No.

**COMPLAINT ASSERTING DENIAL OF
RIGHT OF ACCESS UNDER THE
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, DAMAGES,
ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS (ADA)**

2. Plaintiff seeks damages, injunctive and declaratory relief, attorney fees and costs, against GENNARO'S LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY and GANESHKRUPA 86 CORPORATION dba KWIK & CONVENIENT (hereinafter collectively referred to as

1 “Defendants”), pursuant to Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
2 §§ 12101 et seq.) (“ADA”) and related California statutes.

3 **II. JURISDICTION**

4 3. This Court has original jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343 for ADA
5 claims.

6 4. Supplemental jurisdiction for claims brought under parallel California law –
7 arising from the same nucleus of operative facts – is predicated on 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

8 5. Plaintiff’s claims are authorized by 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

9 **III. VENUE**

10 6. All actions complained of herein take place within the jurisdiction of the United
11 States District Court, Northern District of California, and venue is invoked pursuant to 28
12 U.S.C. § 1391(b), (c).

13 **IV. PARTIES**

14 7. Defendants own, operate, and/or lease the Facility, and consist of a person (or
15 persons), firm, and/or corporation.

16 8. Plaintiff is substantially limited in his ability to walk, and must use a cane,
17 walker, wheelchair or electric scooter for mobility. Consequently, Plaintiff is “physically
18 disabled,” as defined by all applicable California and United States laws, and a member of the
19 public whose rights are protected by these laws.

20 **V. FACTS**

21 9. The Facility is open to the public, intended for non-residential use, and its
22 operation affects commerce. The Facility is therefore a public accommodation as defined by
23 applicable state and federal laws.

24 10. Plaintiff regularly travels to the area where the Facility is located, and visited
25 the Facility on or about September 30, 2020 to buy refreshments. During his visit to the
26 Facility, Plaintiff encountered the following barriers (both physical and intangible) that
27 interfered with, if not outright denied, Plaintiff’s ability to use and enjoy the goods, services,
28 privileges and accommodations offered at the Facility:

- 1 a) Plaintiff could not locate any designated accessible parking stalls in the
 2 Facility's parking lot. He had to park in a standard parking stall that
 3 lacked an access aisle, which he requires in order to offload his mobility
 4 scooter. As a result, he could not use his scooter and was forced to rely
 5 on his cane, which was difficult and painful.
- 6 b) Plaintiff could not find a ramp affording access to the walkway leading
 7 to the Facility entrance. He had to step up onto the curb, exacerbating
 8 the pain and difficulty he experienced.

9 11. The barriers identified in paragraph 10 herein are only those that Plaintiff
 10 personally encountered. Plaintiff is presently unaware of other barriers which may in fact exist
 11 at the Facility and relate to his disabilities. Plaintiff will seek to amend this Complaint once
 12 such additional barriers are identified as it is Plaintiff's intention to have all barriers which
 13 exist at the Facility and relate to his disabilities removed to afford him full and equal access.

14 12. Plaintiff was, and continues to be, deterred from visiting the Facility because
 15 Plaintiff knows that the Facility's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and
 16 accommodations were and are unavailable to Plaintiff due to Plaintiff's physical disabilities.
 17 Plaintiff enjoys the goods and services offered at the Facility, and will return to the Facility
 18 once the barriers are removed.

19 13. Defendants knew, or should have known, that these elements and areas of the
 20 Facility were inaccessible, violate state and federal law, and interfere with (or deny) access to
 21 the physically disabled. Moreover, Defendants have the financial resources to remove these
 22 barriers from the Facility (without much difficulty or expense), and make the Facility
 23 accessible to the physically disabled. To date, however, Defendants refuse to either remove
 24 those barriers or seek an unreasonable hardship exemption to excuse non-compliance.

25 14. At all relevant times, Defendants have possessed and enjoyed sufficient control
 26 and authority to modify the Facility to remove impediments to wheelchair access and to
 27 comply with the 1991 ADA Accessibility Guidelines and/or the 2010 ADA Standards for
 28 Accessible Design. Defendants have not removed such impediments and have not modified the

1 Facility to conform to accessibility standards. Defendants have intentionally maintained the
 2 Facility in its current condition and have intentionally refrained from altering the Facility so
 3 that it complies with the accessibility standards.

4 15. Plaintiff further alleges that the (continued) presence of barriers at the Facility is
 5 so obvious as to establish Defendants' discriminatory intent. On information and belief,
 6 Plaintiff avers that evidence of this discriminatory intent includes Defendants' refusal to adhere
 7 to relevant building standards; disregard for the building plans and permits issued for the
 8 Facility; conscientious decision to maintain the architectural layout (as it currently exists) at the
 9 Facility; decision not to remove barriers from the Facility; and allowance that Defendants'
 10 property continues to exist in its non-compliant state. Plaintiff further alleges, on information
 11 and belief, that the Facility is not in the midst of a remodel, and that the barriers present at the
 12 Facility are not isolated or temporary interruptions in access due to maintenance or repairs.

13 **VI. FIRST CLAIM**

14 **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**

15 Denial of "Full and Equal" Enjoyment and Use

16 16. Plaintiff re-pleads and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in
 17 each of the foregoing paragraphs, and incorporates them herein as if separately re-pled.

18 17. Title III of the ADA holds as a "general rule" that no individual shall be
 19 discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment (or use) of
 20 goods, services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who owns,
 21 operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

22 18. Defendants discriminated against Plaintiff by denying Plaintiff "full and equal
 23 enjoyment" and use of the goods, services, facilities, privileges and accommodations of the
 24 Facility during each visit and each incident of deterrence.

25 Failure to Remove Architectural Barriers in an Existing Facility

26 19. The ADA specifically prohibits failing to remove architectural barriers, which
 27 are structural in nature, in existing facilities where such removal is readily achievable. 42
 28 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).

20. When an entity can demonstrate that removal of a barrier is not readily achievable, a failure to make goods, services, facilities, or accommodations available through alternative methods is also specifically prohibited if these methods are readily achievable. *Id.* § 12182(b)(2)(A)(v).

21. Here, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants can easily remove the architectural barriers at the Facility without much difficulty or expense, that the cost of removing the architectural barriers does not exceed the benefits under the particular circumstances, and that Defendants violated the ADA by failing to remove those barriers, when it was readily achievable to do so.

22. In the alternative, if it was not “readily achievable” for Defendants to remove the Facility’s barriers, then Defendants violated the ADA by failing to make the required services available through alternative methods, which are readily achievable.

Failure to Design and Construct an Accessible Facility

23. Plaintiff alleges on information and belief that the Facility was designed and constructed (or both) after January 26, 1993 – independently triggering access requirements under Title III of the ADA.

24. The ADA also prohibits designing and constructing facilities for first occupancy after January 26, 1993, that aren’t readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities when it was structurally practicable to do so. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(1).

25. Here, Defendants violated the ADA by designing and constructing (or both) the Facility in a manner that was not readily accessible to the physically disabled public – including Plaintiff – when it was structurally practical to do so.¹

Failure to Make an Altered Facility Accessible

26. Plaintiff alleges on information and belief that the Facility was modified after January 26, 1993, independently triggering access requirements under the ADA.

27. The ADA also requires that facilities altered in a manner that affects (or could affect) its usability must be made readily accessible to individuals with disabilities to the

¹ Nothing within this Complaint should be construed as an allegation that Plaintiff is bringing this action as a private attorney general under either state or federal statutes.

1 maximum extent feasible. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2). Altering an area that contains a facility's
 2 primary function also requires making the paths of travel, bathrooms, telephones, and drinking
 3 fountains serving that area accessible to the maximum extent feasible. Id.

4 28. Here, Defendants altered the Facility in a manner that violated the ADA and
 5 was not readily accessible to the physically disabled public – including Plaintiff – to the
 6 maximum extent feasible.

7 Failure to Modify Existing Policies and Procedures

8 29. The ADA also requires reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or
 9 procedures, when necessary to afford such goods, services, facilities, or accommodations to
 10 individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that making such modifications
 11 would fundamentally alter their nature. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).

12 30. Here, Defendants violated the ADA by failing to make reasonable modifications
 13 in policies, practices, or procedures at the Facility, when these modifications were necessary to
 14 afford (and would not fundamentally alter the nature of) these goods, services, facilities, or
 15 accommodations.

16 Failure to Maintain Accessible Features

17 31. Defendants additionally violated the ADA by failing to maintain in operable
 18 working condition those features of the Facility that are required to be readily accessible to and
 19 usable by persons with disabilities.

20 32. Such failure by Defendants to maintain the Facility in an accessible condition
 21 was not an isolated or temporary interruption in service or access due to maintenance or
 22 repairs.

23 33. Plaintiff seeks all relief available under the ADA (i.e., injunctive relief, attorney
 24 fees, costs, legal expense) for these aforementioned violations. 42 U.S.C. § 12205.

25 **VII. SECOND CLAIM**

26 **Unruh Act**

27 34. Plaintiff re-pleads and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in
 28 each of the foregoing paragraphs, and incorporates them herein as if separately re-pled.

1 35. California Civil Code § 51 states, in part, that: All persons within the
2 jurisdiction of this state are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages,
3 facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.

4 36. California Civil Code § 51.5 also states, in part that: No business establishment
5 of any kind whatsoever shall discriminate against any person in this state because of the
6 disability of the person.

7 37. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifically incorporates (by reference) an
8 individual's rights under the ADA into the Unruh Act.

9 38. Defendants' aforementioned acts and omissions denied the physically disabled
10 public – including Plaintiff – full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges
11 and services in a business establishment (because of their physical disability).

12 39. These acts and omissions (including the ones that violate the ADA) denied,
13 aided or incited a denial, or discriminated against Plaintiff by violating the Unruh Act.

14 40. Plaintiff was damaged by Defendants' wrongful conduct, and seeks statutory
15 minimum damages of \$4,000 for each offense.

16 41. Plaintiff also seeks to enjoin Defendants from violating the Unruh Act (and
17 ADA), and recover reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred under California Civil Code
18 § 52(a).

19 **VIII. THIRD CLAIM**

20 **Denial of Full and Equal Access to Public Facilities**

21 42. Plaintiff re-pleads and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in
22 each of the foregoing paragraphs, and incorporates them herein as if separately re-pled.

23 43. Health and Safety Code § 19955(a) states, in part, that: California public
24 accommodations or facilities (built with private funds) shall adhere to the provisions of
25 Government Code § 4450.

26 44. Health and Safety Code § 19959 states, in part, that: Every existing (non-
27 exempt) public accommodation constructed prior to July 1, 1970, which is altered or
28 structurally repaired, is required to comply with this chapter.

1 45. Plaintiff alleges the Facility is a public accommodation constructed, altered, or
2 repaired in a manner that violates Part 5.5 of the Health and Safety Code or Government Code
3 § 4450 (or both), and that the Facility was not exempt under Health and Safety Code § 19956.

4 46. Defendants' non-compliance with these requirements at the Facility aggrieved
5 (or potentially aggrieved) Plaintiff and other persons with physical disabilities. Accordingly,
6 Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief and attorney fees pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 19953.

7 **IX. PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

8 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays judgment against Defendants, and each of them, for:

- 9 1. Injunctive relief, preventive relief, or any other relief the Court deems proper.
10 2. Statutory minimum damages under section 52(a) of the California Civil Code
11 according to proof.
12 3. Attorneys' fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit.²
13 4. Interest at the legal rate from the date of the filing of this action.
14 5. For such other and further relief as the Court deems proper.

15 Dated: January 8, 2021

MOORE LAW FIRM, P.C.

17 /s/ Tanya E. Moore

18 Tanya E. Moore

19 Attorney for Plaintiff

Hendrik Block

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² This includes attorneys' fees under California Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5.

VERIFICATION

I, HENDRIK BLOCK, am the plaintiff in the above-entitled action. I have read the foregoing Complaint and know the contents thereof. The same is true of my own knowledge, except as to those matters which are therein alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters, I believe them to be true.

I verify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: January 7, 2021

/s/ Hendrik Block

Hendrik Block

I attest that the original signature of the person whose electronic signature is shown above is maintained by me, and that his concurrence in the filing of this document and attribution of his signature was obtained.

/s/ Tanya E. Moore

Tanya E. Moore, Attorney for
Plaintiff, Hendrik Block